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I cannot think it likely that marriage-songs would be devoted to the implied glorification of an Ammonitish queen. It is true that Heshbon is referred to in Cant. vii. 6; but the passage seems to be corrupt. One would certainly be glad to think that Rehoboam's mother was not an Ammonitess, though the Chronicler (1 Chron. xii. 13, 14) was probably glad to account for Rehoboam's "evil-doing" by his Ammonitish descent.

T. K. CHEYNE.

ARABIC RESPONSES OF MAIMONIDES.

IN the last number of the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW (XI, 533-50) Mr. G. Margoliouth has published twelve *Arabic Responses of Maimonides*. The two responses described as autograph were hitherto quite unknown; but as for the ten others, a part of a greater collection, they are also found in the famous MS., brought from Africa to Europe by Rabbi Jacob Sasportas, translated in part by Mordecai Tama, afterwards used by Geiger, Munk, Derenbourg, Goldziher, and others, and now, after the death of the Chief Rabbi Bernstein¹ at Hague, in my possession². My copy is quite legible, but not correct. I am therefore most thankful for the communication made by Mr. Margoliouth as a help for the critical control of ten responses. The ten published numbers are in my copy nos. 17-26, and they form a part (nos. 9-18) of the thirty-two answers sent from Maimonides to the scholars of Tyre, the pupils of R. Ephraim. Tama has omitted some of these responses, and dispersed the rest all over his book.

As the last of the responses is incomplete in the copy of the British Museum, I shall now complete both the small lacunae and the missing end, and forward some variations of readings found in my MS. I omit a number of insignificant variations and faults, but as the contents of the responsum is interesting³, I shall add a paraphrase of it in the English language. It will be seen that Tama's translation is not at all trustworthy. "MS. B. M." will designate the text published by Mr. Margoliouth, "MS. S." my copy.

¹ Not Dr. Ferrares, as Mr. Margoliouth says (p. 534).

² In Brody's *Zeitschrift für hebr. Bibliographie*, II, 151-3, I have corrected the superscription found in ספר הדור.

³ Löw, *Graphische Requisiten*, I, 157, 6, and notes at the end of the volume, and Steinschneider, *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften*, p. 23.

P. 549, l. 10. Instead of the vernacular אשׁ, MS. S. has the correct form אי שי.

l. 11. MS. S. אי קאבן עמל.

l. 13. MS. S. אן¹ אל דיין חבר.

l. 14. For כבירא, MS. S. פאחשא.

l. 14. MS. S. לאן מן נץ אל משנה יבין.

l. 15. Here MS. S. בקנקחוס and so often. Mostly as in MS. B. M. קלקנחוס².

l. 16. MS. S. לימחק.

l. 17. MS. S. דלך sine.

l. 18. MS. S. ינמחי.

ll. 21-2. MS. S. יצבנז בה אלאסאכפה.

ll. 27-8. MS. S. לכנה אן מחי ובלג פי מחוה אמתחי.

l. 30. MS. S. ונחוהא [כאלוית ואלופת ואלקלפוניא.

l. 31. MS. S. ינחמע.

l. 32. MS. S. ויענן [בסמז ועסל קדר מא ילתק [י].

l. 32. MS. S. ודעכה.

P. 550, l. 1. MS. S. באלוית ותנפף פהדא הי אצולה.

l. 1. MS. S. וחל באלמא.

l. 2. MS. S. פאן הדא ענדי נאית אלכמא והו קריב ממן.

l. 3. MS. S. (read יסתדרחנ) יחבת בונה ולא יסתננ.

l. 4. MS. S. ויא ענבי.

l. 5. MS. S. בהדא אלדיו.

ll. 6-7. MS. S. שיא יראד בה אן יבקי אלאף מן אלסנין.

l. 7. MS. S. יעמל הו אן.

l. 8. MS. S. adds כי before יחסן.

l. 9. For יחל MS. S. has יכתב. Read יחל (ولا يَحْتَل) "and it will not be altered").

l. 9. MS. S. ולא [יצטרב ואן ארדת מחוה מחוה [ען.

l. 10. MS. S. פעלנא נחן.

l. 11. (last words) MS. S. reads פיה מא and adds או מא אלאפץ.

l. 12. MS. S. אל אמור [אלקאבצה קול [ר' מאיר.

l. 12. For שומה always in MS. S. סומה as usual.

l. 14. Between שך and לולא MS. S. adds אן.

l. 15. MS. S. הדיון [למא פעל פיה [אלואג.

¹ The article is generally written in MS. S. as a separate word. In my notes I have taken no further notice of this peculiarity. The critical points I have added independent of the MS.

² See Löw, l. c., 147.

1. 16. MS. S. has not חתי.
1. 17. MS. S. [גמלה] ה שיא.
1. 17. For לילא read with MS. S. ולא.
11. 18-19. פלא and אמא are correct.
1. 21. For בלב read with MS. S. בלבד (not more).
1. 23. MS. S. has nothing between אברהא and וינפף.
1. 24. MS. S. [פאדא] אראד יכתב בה חל.
1. 25. MS. S. לכני.
1. 25. MS. S. [עלי] אלאצל.
1. 28. MS. S. [בי] יתבת.
1. 30. MS. S. has not מניין.

After line 32 follows in MS. S.:—

להמחות ה"א (?) ואי זה זה הדיו שאין בו קלקנתום • פאעטרץ עלי הדא אל קול והתניא מחה מתוך הספר כשר • יעני כיף תקול אן פרש' סוטה לא תכתב אלא בדיו שאין בו קלקנתום והדא אל ברית' תנץ באן יגוז אן ימחק מתוך הספר וספר תורה אנמא הו מכתוב בדיו שיש בה קלקנתום פכאן אל גואב תפתר כהדין (כהדין MS.) תניא דתניא אמר' מאיר כל ימים שהיינו לומדים אצל ר' ישמעאל לא היינו נותנין קלקנתום בדיו פקד באן לך מן הדא אל נץ בון אל משהור אל מעלום עגדהם כתאבה ספר תורה בדיו שיש בה קלקנתום והו ליתבת ואן אל דיו סתם הו שיש בו קלקנתום והו אלמדכור פי שבת מע אל סקרא ואל קומוס ואל קלקנתום ואן פי חין תעלם ר' מאיר פקט כאן יכתב בדיו שאין בה קלקנתום ורואיה ר' יהודה ענהו לכל מטילין קלקנתום אנמא הי בעד כמאלה וכונה יעלם לא יתעלם ואדא תחרינהא לאפוקי מפלוגתא לא נטיל קלקנתום כמא קלנא וכמא עמלת אנא לכן יחל במא עפץ . . משה . .

The Answer of Maimonides.

חיר is not at all identical with ¹חבר, the sort of ink that remains most firmly, more firmly than קומוס, the rust of iron or shoemaker's ink ²,

¹ חבר must consist of an infusion of galls and vitriol.

² Maimonides explains also in his commentary on the Mishnah (Sota, II, 4, &c.) קומוס as a mineral, although it appears that the Gemara understands "gum" by קומא or קימא. The commentaries of Rasehi, &c., and the lexicographers have "gum." Probably Maimonides explains in his own way, while it is not possible to write with gum without immixture of soot, coal, &c., and in the Mishnah and Gemarah no such immixture of קומוס or קימא is mentioned. Tama has omitted the explanation of קומוס

and קלקנתום, a sort of vitriol. From the text of the Mishna Sota (II, 4) it is evident that it is possible to obliterate what has been written with דיו. Again in Sabbath (XII, 2) is perspicuous that דיו—just as the writing materials prepared with סִיקְרָא, red earth or cinnabar—remains more firmly than the writing effected with מִשְׁקִין or מִי פְרוֹת. Indeed, דיו rests on the vellum—and is therefore in Sabbath considered as דָּבָר שֶׁהוּא רוֹשֵׁם; but if one would give himself the trouble to put it out he could cancel the writing, and דיו is therefore in Sota considered as דָּבָר שֶׁאֵינוֹ רוֹשֵׁם.

The דיו [a kind of Indian ink] is composed thus: oils¹ and similar substances, such as olive oil, pitch, resin, gum ammoniac (اشق), are burned, and their soot is collected in vessels. The soot is then mixed with as much gum (سمنغ²) and honey as it can accept, and bruised and rubbed, until thereof are made thin slices, which are anointed with olive oil and dried. If somebody were to dissolve this mass in water, and write a סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה with the solution, he would err grossly³. For such ink is not much more endurable than מִשְׁקִין and מִי פְרוֹת. When the סֵפֶר has been revolved once or twice from the beginning to the end, most of the writing will have gone away. It is therefore impossible to think that Moses should have written his מִצְוֹת, which should be a witness against Israel (Deut. xxxi. 26), and which he wished should endure thousands of years, with such ink. But, if the composition is dissolved in an infusion of galls⁴, and the writing, after that it has been dry, is polished⁵ with a bit of cloth (?), it will rest undisturbed. Nevertheless, it is possible to obliterate the writing. This ink possesses then the qualities of the Mishnaic דיו, and Maimonides wrote therefore his own copy of the תּוֹרָה with this composition, that the סֵפֶר should be unquestionably בְּהִלְכָּה.

and קלקנתום, as also the next following explanation of סִיקְרָא. And he has erroneously added: חָרַצוּ שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִי בֶן דִּי לָרִי and כִּי מִצִּינוּ כְּמֵה שִׁינִים בּוֹה, and so led Löw (l. c., 157-8) into errors.

¹ פסח הדגנים is an addition, not in the text. Perhaps Tama has read אֶרְדֶּהָן for רֹאשִׁי. Löw, l. c., 158, cannot but follow Tama.

² Vernacular for صمغ cf. note 12 (Löw, l. c., 158 otherwise).

³ Tama has erred grossly in adding וַיִּדְּהָ כָתֹב יֵשׁ. Probably somebody has read the text for Tama, and Tama has written down the Hebrew translation. He has then misunderstood the Arabic word خطا, and thought to hear كُتِبَتْ. Cf. note 8 and note 12.

⁴ Tama adds מִצֵּם קִקְנָרוֹס quite erroneously.

⁵ سقل more vernacular than صقل. Tama has misunderstood سقل, and translated as if the text had ثَقُل. Not credible if he had himself looked in the text.

Maimonides remarks that galls are absolutely necessary for the preparation of ג'י. When R. Meir put vitriol in his ink to make it more durable (Sota, 20a), galls must also have been put in it. Otherwise the addition of vitriol would be of no use, and the writing would not last, as can be seen by experiment. But it is quite indifferent if one should prefer to put the galls in the first mixture itself, or if he would dissolve the described slices in an infusion of galls, as Maimonides has done it.

Finally, Maimonides decides, that albeit it is preferable (למצה) to write the ס"ת with the ink he has used himself, it is not at all prohibited (לעכב) to add the vitriol, so that one now gets a mixture of Indian ink (מדא) and חמר. For thus says R. Jehuda, whose decision is peremptory, as the latest of the rabbis handling this theme, in the name of R. Meir (Sota, l. c.¹), that it is permitted to use vitriol except to the writing of פ' סוטה (which it shall be possible to obliterate). R. Nissim has also decided thus in a responsum famous with us², and also found here in Egypt, although he does not describe at length the procedure as Maimonides has done it. Also from Jerushalmi Sota (II, 4) it is evident that the addition of vitriol is permitted. It was but in the time that R. Meir was a pupil under the teaching of R. Ishmael, that he, following his master, did not add the vitriol. Afterwards, as he was himself a master, he did so, and from this time derives the tradition of R. Jehuda. Nevertheless, Maimonides made his ink—as has already been said—without vitriol to evade all discussion.

D. SIMONSEN.

COPENHAGEN, Aug. 1, 1899.

A HEBREW POEM IN VINDICATION OF THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY.

AMONG the MSS. of the Montefiore College there is a small volume in 16mo, containing Hebrew secular poems. They are written in

¹ The omission of the name of R. Meir by Tama has led Löw into the error that the reading in the Gemarah which Maimonides had should be another than ours (cf. Löw, l. c., p. 151 and note 662).

² "With us," that is, in Spain. Maimonides writes thus ær. Sel. 1488=1177. See פאר דער, n. 53, the subscription under the last of the answers to the Tyrian scholars. Graetz (*Geschichte d. J.*, VI², p. 300, n. 1) is hence not correct when he writes that Egypt could not be a foreign land for Maimonides in the year 1175.